

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 /076 W

-----033834 061742Z /66

R 061608Z JUL 78

FM AMEMASSY BRAZZAVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 802

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRAZZAVILLE 0885

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CF

SUBJECT: CURRENT POLITICAL ATMOSPHERICS

SUMMARY: WITH YHOMBY OUT OF TOWN, DISSATISFACTION, GREATER-  
THAN-USUAL INEFFICIENCY, AND RUMORS ARE RAMPANT. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH, AS WE HAVE REMARKED IN PREVIOUS REPORTING, CONGO HAS GONE THROUGH VARIOUS PERIODS OF APPEARING TO FLOAT RATHER AIMLESSLY POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY, WE NOW ARE IN RATHER A DIFFERENT PHASE, WHERE CONGOLESE OF VARIOUS LEVELS WHOM WE ARE ENCOUNTERING ARE MORE VOCAL THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE OUR RETURN IN VENTING THEIR ANXIETY OVER THE CONGO'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FUTURE. THIS IS NOT, WE BELIEVE, INTENDED TO ENMESH US IN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS, NOR IS IT NECESSARILY ON THE BASIS OF RELATIONSHIPS WE HAVE ESTABLISHED. IN FACT, NEWLY ARRIVED FRENCH CHARGE PAVEC HAS OBSERVED THAT MANY CONGOLESE ARE INDISCREETLY EXPRESSING THEIR DISCONTENT AND NERVOUSNESS OPENLY TO HIM AS WELL.

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2. MOST ANXIETY IS CORRECTLY CENTERED ABOUT THE CONGO'S SEEMINGLY HOPELESS ECONOMIC PLIGHT. THE STATE ENTERPRISES ARE BANKRUPT; THE IDEA OF HAVING INTELLECTUALS WORK THE FIELDS IS BEING RE-EXAMINED; TO NO ONE'S GREAT SURPRISE, YHOMBY'S TRIP TO OTHER SOCIALIST PARADISES BROUGHT LITTLE IN THE WAY OF CONCRETE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND; CONGOLESE ARE NOW HAVING THEIR SALARIES

REDUCED IN ORDER THAT "CONTRIBUTIONS" MAY BE MADE TO A NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND TO ASSIST THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR (BRAZZAVILLE 786 NOTAL). THAT IS, "CONTRIBUTIONS" ARE TO BE MADE WHEN SALARIES ARE RECEIVED, SINCE CHECKS, AT LEAST THOSE FOR GOCB BUREAUCRATS, ARE OFTEN WEEKS LATE IN COMING, AS MINISTERIAL MENDICANTS SCAMPER TO OTHER CAPITALS FOR BUDGETARY ASSISTANCE. WHILE IT IS NOWHERE NEAR AN AUDACIOUS SCALE, SIGNIFICANT CORRUPTION AMONG HIGHERS-UP IS ANOTHER IRRITANT IN PROMPTING DISCONTENT. WITH WORK AND MONEY SHORT, A NEW WAVE OF BURGLARIES IS AFFECTING BRAZZAVILLE AND POINTE-NOIRE, AND THE LOCAL POLICE ARE CLEARLY INCAPABLE OF HANDLING IT.

3. AND, WITH YHOMBY-OPANGO HAVING BEEN ABSENT FROM BRAZZAVILLE FOR ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS THAN TWO MONTHS, ABROAD AND IN THE NORTH, THE CLEAR IMPRESSION IS THAT LITTLE IS BEING DONE TO ALLEVIATE ANY OF THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS. (MANY BELIEVE HE WENT NORTH, IN FACT, TO ESCAPE THE DIFFICULTIES). CURRENT VISIT BY YHOMBY TO INTERIOR, AND REPORTED PLANS TO MOVE NGOUABI BODY TO OWANDO, HIS HOME TOWN, ALSO HEIGHTEN DIVISION BETWEEN THOSE IN NORTH AND IN SOUTH. IN A FASHION HARDLY NEW AMONG LEADERS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH SIMILAR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, YHOMBY HAS OF LATE BEEN BEATING THE DRUM AGAINST ALL SORTS OF IMAGINARY FOREIGN ENEMIES, THE LATEST SEEMING TO BE GABON: WITNESS HIS SPEECH  
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AT MBOMO, ON OCCASION OF 12TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONGOLESE ARMY (TEXT POUCHED DAO KINSHASA AND AF/C-KATES) CALLING FOR "INCREASED

VIGILANCE AGAINST FORCES NEARBY," WITH PLANS TO MAKE MBOMO (APPROXIMATELY 50 KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF KELLE) A MILITARY "FORTRESS." SUCH AN OUTBURST SERVES TO PROVOKE WRATH OF OTHERS, INCLUDING GABONESE, FAR MORE THAN RELIEVING PROBLEMS, EVEN PSYCHOLOGICALLY. INSTEAD, IT RESPONDS IT WOULD SEEM, TO NEW SOVIET AND ANGOLAN PRESSURES FOR CONGOLESE TO HEED RADICAL LINE. FRENCH TELL US THAT RECENT VISIT TO OWANDO TO SEE YHOMBY, BY FAPLA INSPECTOR GENERAL ALEXANDER RODRIQUES, HAD THAT AS ITS INTENTION.

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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-----033897 061741Z /66

R 061605Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 803  
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRAZZAVILLE 0885

4. MEANWHILE, THE MOST PETTY OF DECISIONS HERE MUST BE REFERRED TO THE HIGHEST OF LEVELS. SEVERAL CONSULAR REQUESTS FROM THIS EMBASSY, FOR A VISA FOR CONSUL RUPP AND INFORMATION ON THE WOMEN DETAINED IN IMPFONDO (BRAZZAVILLE 862 NOTAL) HAVE REQUIRED AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF TIME AND EFFORT, EVEN FOR THE CONGO. RELATED TO THE IMPFONDO INCIDENT, PERHAPS: A FRENCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANT WAS HELD FOR 48 HOURS RECENTLY WHILE CONGOLESE CHECKED TO SEE WHETHER HE WAS A MERCENARY. FRENCH FEEL THAT, AMONG OTHER CAUSES, EARLIER SHABA FORCE HAS CREATED MERCENOPHOBIA HERE. MANY, INCLUDING SEVERAL MINISTERS, CITE GOVERNMENTAL PARANOIA AND INEPTITUDE AS SYMPTOMATIC OF YHOMBY'S SHORTCOMINGS; OTHERS, MORE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO THE PRESIDENT, DESCRIBE THE FOOT-DRAGGING AS PART OF AN EFFORT BY, ALTERNATIVELY, SOUTHERNERS AND/OR SASSOU, TO DISCREDIT YHOMBY. SOME ARE COMMENTING OPENLY THAT SASSOU HAS DEVELOPED A VETO POWER OVER MANY OF YHOMBY'S ACTIONS.

5. MEANWHILE, AN INCREASED PRESENCE OF ARMS IN  
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BRAZZAVILLE HAS BEEN REPORTED BY SEVERAL HERE, WITH THE EXPLANATION THAT MILITIA ARE TO BE ARMED. THE LOCAL RUMOR MILL CIRCULATES A SCENARIO ACCORDING TO WHICH SOUTHERNERS HAD PLANNED A COUP AGAINST YHOMBY FOR AUGUST; THE NORTH, LEARNING ABOUT IT, THEN PLANNED A PRE-EMPTIVE MOVE (PRECISELY WHAT, IS UNCLEAR) FOR JULY BUT; UPON HEARING THAT, THE SOUTHERNERS ARE PLANNING TO MOVE NOW, AND THIS IS WHAT HAS LED TO THE DEFENSIVE ARMING OF THE MILITIA.

ADD TO THIS THE REPORT THAT CUBANS AND SOVIETS PLAN TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AN ENSUING SITUATION OF CHAOS BY PUTTING SOMEONE, "OTHER THAN SASSOU," INTO POWER. FOR THIS, "1,000" CUBANS ALLEGEDLY ARE IN CABINDA WAITING TO SPILL OVER THE BORDER. YHOMBY'S RUMORED REACTION WAS TO HAVE PURCHASED A PRIVATE HOTEL FOR HIMSELF IN PARIS.

6. THESE ARE REPORTS WHICH ARE CIRCULATING AMONG MANY IN BRAZZAVILLE AND WE REPORT THEM FOR THE RECORD. WHATEVER RUMORS MAY BE WORTH, FRENCH RECALL ONLY ONE PREVIOUS TIME RECENTLY WHEN THIS KIND OF ATMOSPHERE PREVAILED, AND THAT WAS SHORTLY PRIOR TO ASSASSINATION OF NGOUABI.  
KATZEN

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